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For Immediate Release:

FORMER ILLINOIS GOVERNOR TO LEAVE PAPERS, MEMORABILIA TO EIU

CHARLESTON -- Former Illinois Governor Jim Edgar, a 1968 graduate of Eastern Illinois University, announced Saturday that he plans to donate papers and other memorabilia from his political career to his alma mater.

Friends and supporters heard the news during a reception following a commencement ceremony at which Edgar received an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree.

"There is no more appropriate place than Eastern Illinois University for me to leave my papers and the various things (wife Brenda and I) have collected," Edgar said. "We are very excited that these papers and other objects that I received as governor and, before that, as secretary of state, will have a permanent place to be.

"Hopefully, they will be helpful to those in the future who might be doing research

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on the happenings of state government during the period I was involved," he added.

The Edgar Collection, consisting of a variety of documents, videos and artifacts encompassing his life and career in state government, will be housed in Eastern's Booth Library, currently undergoing renovation.

"Booth Library is a special place for me," Edgar said, recalling that student government meetings took place there at the time he served as student body president.

The bulk of the collection will be found in University Archives where state-of-the-art conservation and preservation facilities will be available, and will serve students, faculty and the community at-large for scholarly and public reference and research.

The remaining items, including artifacts, will be used in both permanent and temporary public displays and exhibits featured in the Edgar Room, a multi-purpose room to be located immediately off the north foyer.

"It is hoped that the Edgar Room and collections will serve as a constant reminder to Eastern's student body that through determination and hard work, persons from all walks of life and backgrounds can achieve greatness and become a major influence upon society," said Eastern President Carol D. Surles.

"I hope (this collection) is a great asset to the university and to future generations who are interested in knowing what happened in Illinois in the 1990's," Edgar added.

Although it is not yet known when Booth Library will take possession of the Edgar Collection, library officials have expressed interest in getting items at the earliest opportunity, allowing more time for the preparation of the collection for the renovated

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library's planned opening in January 2002.

Edgar, a native of Charleston, graduated from Eastern in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in history.

Edgar began his career in state government in 1968 as a top aide to leaders in the Illinois House and Senate. In 1975-76, he served as Director of State Services for the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver, Colorado. He was first elected to the Illinois House of Representatives from Charleston in 1976; in 1979 and 1980, he served as Director of Legislative Affairs for the Governor. Elected Secretary of State in 1981, he served for 10 years, winning re-election in 1986, by the largest plurality ever recorded for a statewide candidate.

In 1990, Edgar was elected the 38th Governor of Illinois and enjoyed widespread support throughout his two terms in office. His retirement from public office earlier this year marked 30 years of state governmental service. Subsequently, he accepted a position as Distinguished Fellow at the University of Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs where he will teach and lecture. He also is a Resident Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University for the 1999 fall term.